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Sent: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 8:18 PM
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Subject: Commission for Technology Advancement and Connecticut Legislature - Municipal Access to State-wide FiberNet

To members of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections, Representatives DONOVAN, 84th Dist., SHARKEY, 88th Dist., SEN. WILLIAMS, 29th Dist. and LOONEY, 11th Dist. and The Connecticut Commission for Technology Advancement of the Office of Policy and Management.

As President of the Connecticut Chapter of GMIS International our association of Connecticut Municipal Information Technology Managers wish to communicate our support of the Governor's Bill No. 5027.

Sec. 47. Section 4d-80 " (c) 2(A) Connecting institutions of higher education, libraries, public elementary and secondary schools, regional educational service centers, municipal facilities, and other parties through a state-wide high speed, flexible network that will allow for video, voice and data transmission at reasonable rates"

The proposed "Commission for Technology Advancement within the Office of Policy and Management" has the support and interest of Ct GMIS in the area of connecting municipal facilities across the new Federal ARRA funded State-wide Fiber Optic Network.

The GMIS members are particularly cheered by seeing the addition of "municipal facilities" to the entities authorized by state statute to share connections to the Internet and each other's municipality through the state's upgraded fiber network. The inclusion of "and municipal facility" in the commission's connectivity responsibilities is a subject that Ct GMIS has long advocated for and all our members are very pleased to see this having a place in the proposed legislation.

The value of any network is established by the number of all entities connecting to it (Metcalf's Law). The state's 169 municipalities have long advocated for high speed connections among their own facilities, to all other towns, and to the state, as well as outbound connections to the world through broadband Internet connections. By taking advantage of its huge buying power and federal funding, the state government has now initiated and will soon successfully implement a statewide fiber network with the capacity to achieve this long-held goal of "wiring" the entire state down to the smallest locality.

In order to generate the maximal value from the State's investment, GMIS is advocating that the Commission emphasize the reduction of barriers for municipal interconnection across such a potentially high value asset. The State-initiated project does not recognize the full cost barrier within municipalities to produce this value, similar to the earlier federal e-rate initiative that wired one school and one library in each town. While this program was very successful, it was limited to the single entity in each town and without further funding, the towns were often left without the resources necessary to wire all municipal facilities and schools.

We would urge the Committee to require the new Commission to make sustained efforts to locate and generate funding opportunities for the municipalities to expand and sustain their connections to the

state's new network. Two critical elements of this attention to funding should include: 1) to allow the municipalities the benefit of muni-to-muni connection at only the internal municipality's physical hook-up costs and 2) to allow the municipalities the benefit of Internet Access, as their School Districts have, at no or minimal costs.

The Connecticut information systems managers in GMIS have held state-wide meetings where State I/T personnel (from DAS and BEST) have been briefed on our municipal concerns and expectations. There is wide appreciation among members for the public policy goals to be examined and implemented by the new Commission.

Including municipal access to the State-wide FiberNet is a very encouraging legislative step – we look forward to working together with the new Commission to assure its success and enhance the competitiveness of the state and all its municipalities.

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